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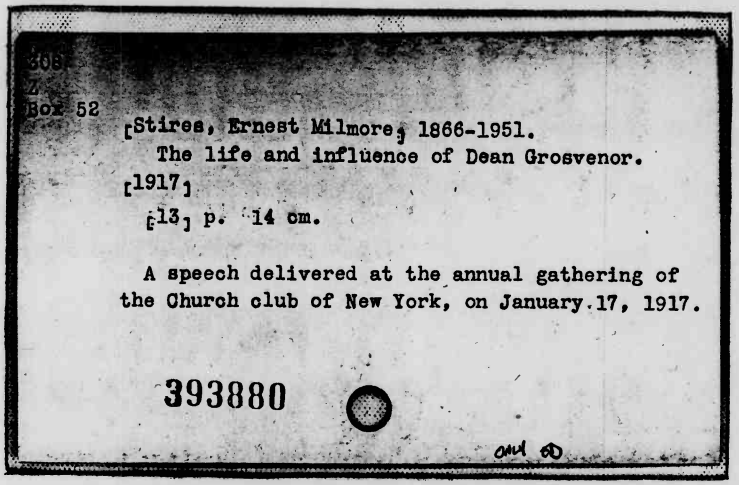
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# The Life and Influence of Dean Grosvenor

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# The Life and Influence of Dean Grosvenor

# A Foreword

At the annual gathering of the Church Club of New York on January 17, 1917, I was asked to speak on "The Life and Influence of Dean Grosvenor." The speech was neither adequate nor memorable, but the subject lent interest and worth, and friends of the Dean have asked that it be printed.

I have not ventured to describe the tenderness and devotion perfectly revealed in him as a son and a brother, nor the depth of our sympathy with his dear ones. Our minds and hearts bear witness that we know and feel.

Doubtless many who attended that last brief service in the Crypt on December 13th thought of Tennyson's words on the burial of Wellington in St. Paul's:

"In the vast Cathedral leave him;
God accept him, Christ receive him!"

Our faith permits us to believe that the spirit of the Cathedral's first dean will often be there, coming from the life eternal and light perpetual to urge the completion of the great enterprise, and to inspire us to continue in the holy fellowship and in the way of all good works.

ERNEST M. STIRES.

February 15, 1917.

IT seems but yesterday that he walked among us with the bright smile and the brave word. It is too soon after his promotion for love to think and speak with discretion. Later, time will give the mind its equal place with the heart. But even now we can see that never was death less like unto death. At noon on December 9th, the Dean knelt at the altar of the Chapel of Our Saviour in the Seamen's Church Institute; there he received and gave the sacred symbols of the body and blood of Christ; there he heard the choir sing "Unfold, ye portals everlasting;" and three hours later he obeyed the call of his King and entered those portals.

And yet we cannot realize even that in the body he is no longer here. So wide was his service, and so faithfully performed, that all his works seem to proclaim his presence and support; so vital was his spirit that the influence of his personality draws us now as in life. We may be nearer the truth than we know if we think of him as still among us to-night, accepting our tribute of respect and love.

In the book Ecclesiasticus we read, "If thou findest a good man, rise up early in the

morning to go to him, and let thy feet wear the steps of his door." The goodness of Dean Grosvenor explains his influence; no negative goodness, but a flaming purity, an uncompromising honesty, an instinctive courage, a self-sacrificing sympathy, a virile and complete manhood. Therefore many feet came to "wear the steps of his door," and none came in vain. His well-stored mind, his rare judgment, his knowledge of men, his quick sympathy, his certain faith, combined to make him an invaluable counsellor. His belief in attempting large things for God, and his skill and devotion in their fulfilment revealed "a workman that needed not to be ashamed."

Such was Grosvenor the man; a noble foundation for Grosvenor the priest, and nobly the spiritual structure grew. In Brooklyn, in Lenox, and as Arthur Brooks's successor in the Church of the Incarnation, the simplicity and force of his teaching, his convincing character, and his lovable personality won the hearts of multitudes, and won them for Christ. In the administration of a great parish, in his membership on boards, commissions, and committees of which he was generally the chairman, he exhibited executive faculties of the highest order. On the floor of the General Convention and of the Diocesan Convention he commanded instant respect for the aptness of his word, and for his simplicity, sincerity, courage and force.

His churchmanship merits at least a brief consideration. Dean Grosvenor belonged to that largest school in the Church, which is no school at all, but the Church itself, the great central body, the *via media* between extremes, holding all the truth and authority of Catholicity, with all the purity and freedom of the Protestant reformation, and finding no discord but only harmony in that great symphony of Christianity.

In a paper opened after his death were found certain requests. One of these expressed a wish for some simple memorial of him in the Cathedral. "It is my desire," he wrote, "to have my life built into the Cathedral." He lived his desire; he built his life into the Cathedral; as its able, hospitable Dean; as the chairman of the committee on the fabric (the building committee), equipped with knowledge and taste, with zeal and discretion; as the advocate in the homes of the rich for the building of God's great House, a spiritual home for the multitudes

whom Jesus loved; in all this and in a score of other ways he built his life into the Cathedral. When the trustees at a recent meeting resolved to raise three million dollars to carry forward the great work, they also resolved that the first five hundred thousand obtained should constitute a memorial to Dean Grosvenor, two hundred and fifty thousand for the endowment of the salary of the dean, and two hundred and fifty thousand for a structural part of the nave. Thus they will endeavor still further to build his life into the Cathedral. How fortunate that he was the Cathedral's first dean! The influence of that good Churchman, that true Christian, that cultured priest of large vision and wide sympathy has created an invaluable tradition.

Doubtless you are thinking of him in a yet more intimate relationship, and that is inevitable; for it was his genius for friendship which made his manhood nourishing and his priesthood a real leadership. Your true leader must be your friend. Here we enter a room so full of dear memories that the heart o'ermasters the tongue and few words are best. He had the gift of understanding; and he possessed the rare quality of unfailing loyalty. We can think of him when we recall the little lad's answer to a judge in the Juvenile Court who asked what he meant by the word "friend:" "Why, Judge," said the boy, a "friend is a feller that knows all about you, but likes you just the same!" Such is the friendship of Christ, and such was Grosvenor's friendship. Tennyson was thinking of these qualities when he wrote:

"Whereof the man, that with me trod
This planet, was a noble type,
Appearing ere the times were ripe,
That friend of mine who lives with God."

What a welcome was his, and how glorious the company in which he stands! There is the statesman-bishop, our late Diocesan, strong, wise, loving, who could "walk arm-in-arm with kings nor lose the common touch," and on whose firm foundations we are everywhere building in this Diocese. There is the revered Morgan Dix, honored by all; whom we gratefully remember as holding definite convictions, with unfailing consideration for the convictions of others; speaking the truth in love; a model of humility, dignity and devotion; a permanent figure in the company of true Churchmen. And there is the great Huntington, for great he

was and is. You will not easily recall another whose contributions to the cause of Christ, and to the Church in this country and in this Diocese were so vast as his. Our great and beloved Huntington! And now Grosvenor, who prayed and worked with them, stands worthily at their side.

What, think you, is the message they send to us to-night? They are beseeching us to realize that God has prepared and summoned America for the moral leadership of the world. They are calling us to wisdom and courage; they are bemoaning the disorder of the American mind, the threatened extinction of American spirit, the peril of the ignorance, atheism and anarchy of millions of alien citizens who know not our ideals, or oppose them. They implore us to show a sense of responsibility for the vast power which Christians possess, power of knowledge and wisdom, power of wealth and influence. They beseech us quickly in this Epiphanytide to lay our gifts, like the other wise men, at the feet of Christ, for solving humanity's pressing problems, for bearing the other man's burden, to save their souls and ours, to make America's moral leadership honored among the nations, to make the Church gratefully respected, and to make Christ convincing by the self-sacrificing witness the Christians bear for Him. This is a part, only a part, of their solemn message to us to-night. At the last General Convention when the revision of the Prayer Book was under consideration, it was proposed to omit from the words of the well-known prayer in the Penitential Office "who turn to Thee in weeping, fasting and praying," the word "weeping," when Grosvenor arose and impressively besought the House to retain the word "weeping." "That," he said, "is exactly what Europe is doing to-day, and such an experience may yet come to America."

We should not fittingly honor his life and influence to-night, if we failed to hear the message which he and the noble company are sending to us. Therefore we put aside for the present our desires for power and pleasure, our feverish earthy ambitions, while we lift up our minds and hearts to the vision of the divine purpose and of our place in the great plan. God grant that we may not die before we have really lived! Think me not trivial in suggesting that I find something of Grosvenor's message to us to-night in some lines of Henry Newbolt:

There's a breathless hush in the Close to-
night—
Ten to make and the match to win—
A bumping pitch and a blinding light,
An hour to play and the last man in.
And it's not for the sake of a ribboned coat,
Or the selfish hope of a season's fame,
But his Captain's hand on his shoulder smote
"Play up! play up! and play the game!"

The sand of the desert is sodden red,—
Red with the wreck of a square that
broke;—
The Gatling's jammed and the colonel dead
And the regiment blind with dust and
smoke.
The river of death has brimmed his banks,
And home's afar, and Honour a name,
But the voice of a schoolboy rallies the ranks,
"Play up! play up! and play the game!"

This is the word that year by year
While in her place the School is set
Every one of her sons must hear,
And none that hears it dare forget.
This they all with a joyful mind
Bear through life like a torch in flame,
And falling, fling to the host behind—
"Play up! play up! and play the game!"

Send back no doubtful answer. We who hope to stand in that goodly company send up to our King, up to His faithful soldier and servant whose memory we gratefully keep to-night, our vow of reconsecration: by Christ's good help we will fight the good fight; we will finish the course; we will keep the faith!

Let the last word and the heartiest be one of gratitude to God for the inspiring example of William Mercer Grosvenor, priest and doctor, brother and friend; and gratitude for the faith that tells us he lives and serves and waits. Then recall Milton's majestic lines:

"For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime,
Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer.
* * * * * * * * *
"Weep no more, woeful shepherds, weep no
more;
For Lycidas, your sorrow, is not dead.
Sunk though he be beneath the watery floor,
So sinks the day-star in the ocean-bed,
And yet anon repairs his drooping head,
And tricks his beams, and with new-
spangled ore
Flames in the forehead of the morning sky;
So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,
Through the dear might of Him who walked
the waves."

May that dear Might unite us all when our work is done!

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